

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 03687 291115Z

17

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 SIL-01 LAB-06 CAB-09 COME-00

DOTE-00 EB-11 FAA-00 DRC-01 /154 W

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R 290922Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0373

INFO AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

UNCLAS LISBON 3687

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, PO

SUBJ: MILITARY MOBILIZATION OF STRIKE-BOUND TAP

REFS: (A) LISBON 3659; (B) LISBON 2946;

(C) LISBON A-94

SUMMARY: TAP PLACED UNDER MILITARY MOBILIZATION DUE TO DAY-OLD STRIKE BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS. STRIKE ACTION, TAKEN DESPITE TAP INTER-UNION COMMITTEE OPPOSITION AND ATTEMPTED ARBITRATION BY LABOR MINISTER, ALSO AFFECTED INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES RECEIVING MAINTENANCE SUPPORT FROM TAP. PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE OTHER WORKERS DID NOT SUPPORT STRIKE, INASMUCH AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAD BEEN PROCEEDING NORMALLY. FROM GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW STRIKE WAS PARTICULARLY INOPPORTUNE BECAUSE TAP, IN ADDITION TO CARRYING OUT ITS NORMAL SERVICES, WAS PROVIDING EXTRA FLIGHTS TO ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE AND HELPING REPATRIATE TROOPS FROM GUINEA-BISSAU. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 LISBON 03687 291115Z

1. LATE ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 27 MINISTER OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR SANCHES OSORIO ANNOUNCED ON TV THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS DECIDED TO PLACE TAP UNDER MILITARY MOBILIZATION AND MARTIAL LAW IN VIEW OF STRIKE BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS WHICH BEGAN AT 7 P.M. ON THE 26TH. THIS MOVE WAS JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF COST TO THE NATION AND MILITARY NECESSITY TO MAINTAIN FLIGHTS REPATRIATING TROOPS FROM GUINEA-BASSAU. (REFTEL A).

2. SPOKESMEN FOR THE 2500 WORKERS OF THE DIVISION OF MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING, CITING WHAT THEY ALLEGED ARE THE OPPOSED CLASS INTERESTS OF THE AIRLINE'S 24 UNIONS AND CONDEMNING THE INTER-UNION COMMITTEE AND WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVES IN TAP MANAGEMENT FOR IMPEDING THEIR DEMANDS, HAD SUBMITTED A LIST OF THESE SEPARATE DEMANDS ON AUGUST 18 WITH A DEADLINE OF 3:30 P.M. ON THE 26TH. THE LIST INCLUDED AMONG OTHERS "SANITIZATION" OF MANAGEMENT; BASE SALARY OF 16,000 ESCUDOS (DOLS 640) PER MONTH; NO DISMISSALS WITHOUT JUST CAUSE; JUDGMENT OF "CRIMINAL RIOT POLICE" WHO "INVADED" TAP INSTALLATIONS DURING A JULY 1973 DISPUTE; AND PUNISHMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR PRE-APRIL 25 DISMISSALS.

3. ON AUGUST 26 LABOR MINISTER COSTA MARTINS MET AT THE MINISTRY WITH MANAGEMENT, INTER-UNION COMMITTEE, AND MAINTENANCE WORKERS REPRESENTATIVES, AND THEN PUT IN PERSONAL APPEARANCE AT THE SCENE, WHERE THE WORKERS REFUSED TO PARLEY THROUGH AN ELECTED COMMITTEE, HE REFUSED TO DEAL WITH THEM EN MASSE.

4. AFTER THE STRIKE DECISION, PICKETS WERE ESTABLISHED AND TAP BEGAN CANCELLING ITS FLIGHTS 'FOR OPERATIONAL REASONS', WITH NO ADVANCE NOTICE TO ITS PASSENGERS. AS TAP PROVIDES MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR A NUMBER OF THE OTHER INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES (REPORTEDLY ONLY PAN AM, TWA, VARIG, LUFTHANSA, SAS, AND BEA HAVE THEIR OWN), THEY WERE ALSO FORCED TO CANCEL FLIGHTS TO LISBON. THE ONLY FLIGHTS BEING MAINTAINED WERE, BY GOVERNMENT ORDER, THE FLIGHTS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 LISBON 03687 291115Z

FROM GUINEA-BISSAU.

5. INITIAL PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THAT THE REST OF TAP'S NEARLY 9000 WORKERS (6500 IN LISBON) WERE HONORING IF NOT SUPPORTING THE STRIKE. HOWEVER, LATER PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THE TAP INTER-UNION COMMITTEE HAD DECLARED ITS LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKE, AND THAT "NUMEROUS" OTHER WORKERS WERE CHANTING

"NO STRIKE" AND HAD ISSUED THEIR OWN COMMUNIQUE POINTING OUT THAT A MATTER OF SUCH MAGNITUDE HAS TO BE THE JOINT DECISION OF ALL WORKERS. GOVERNMENT, MANAGEMENT AND INTER-UNION PERSONNEL VARIOUSLY POINTED OUT THAT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS WERE PROCEEDING NORMALLY, WITH MORE THAN 120 CLAUSES ALREADY HAVING BEEN AGREED TO, SO THAT THIS STRIKE WAS CONTRARY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS. A MEMBER OF TAP MANAGEMENT CLAIMED TO THE PRESS THAT THE STRIKE WAS TOTALLY POLITICAL AND DIVISIVE, AND SERVED THE INTERESTS OF THE LEFT SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (MES) AND MAOIST MRPP. IN RESPONSE, THE MAINTENANCE WORKERS DECLARED THAT THEY WERE BEING SUPPORTED BY ALMOST ALL SECTORS OF TAP WORKERS, EXCEPT FOR THE "PETIT-BOURGEOUS ARISTOCRACY" OF HIGHLY-PAID AIRPORT AND FLIGHT PERSONNEL, AND CONDEMNED THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO INCITE PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THEM.

6. ACCORDING TO EMBOFF, THERE WERE TROOPS AT THE AIRPORT LAST NIGHT BUT NONE WERE VISIBLE THIS MORNING. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CURRENT INDICATION WHEN FLIGHTS WILL RESUME.

7. COMMENT: THE STRIKE CAME JUST WHEN TAP WAS PERFORMING EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES. ALREADY IN THE MIDST OF THE BUSY SUMMER SEASON, TAP HAS RECENTLY BEEN PROVIDING UP TO 8 EXTRA FLIGHTS A DAY TO ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE (AS ALL REGULAR FLIGHTS FROM THERE ARE BOOKED UNTIL OCTOBER). THEN, STARTING LAST WEEKEND THE AIRLINE WAS TASKED ALONG WITH THE AIR FORCE WITH REPATRIATING TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT FROM GUINEA-BISSAU, WHICH AT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 LISBON 03687 291115Z

LEAST INITIALLY HAS MEANT UP TO 10 FLIGHTS A DAY. IT ALSO CAME AT A TIME WHEN THE OTHER INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES WERE HAVING THEIR OWN PARTIAL STRIKE. THE GOP'S MILITARY MOBLIZATION OF TAP DEMONSTRATES, AS DID ITS PREVIOUS ACTION IN THE EARLIER POSTAL STRIKE (REFTEL B) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW DISRUPTION OF A SECTOR IT CONSIDERS VITAL.
POST

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